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S E C R E T MANAMA 000720

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DEPARTMENT FOR S/WCI, NEA/PPD AND NEA/ARP
CAIRO FOR STEVE BONDY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/16/2029

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [BA](#)

SUBJECT: TORTURE ALLEGATIONS OF BAHRAINI GTMO DETAINEE -
GUIDANCE REQUESTED

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Robert S. Ford for
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (U) SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST. The Abu Gharieb prison scandal has spurred stories of Bahraini GTMO detainees being tortured. An open letter to President Bush that specified a Bahraini citizen by name has gained credibility with some government and NGO leaders. Sunni Islamist parliamentarians raised the reports of torture with the Minister of State. To the Embassy's knowledge the prisoner has made no formal complaints of abuse. ACTION REQUEST: Post requests immediate press guidance to counter allegations of abuse of a Bahraini GTMO detainee. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) On May 15 English daily "Bahrain Tribune" featured allegations by two former British-Pakistani GTMO detainees that US prison guards at Guantanamo Bay beat an ailing Bahraini detainee. In the same article vocal anti-American Parliament member Shaikh Mohammed Khalid condemned the torture and called for national mobilization to release all six Bahraini detainees. Arabic daily "Al Ayam" also reported the allegation which was derived from an open letter to President Bush. The letter named Juma Al-Dossari as the victim.

3. (U) On May 16 Arabic daily, "Akhbar Al Khaleej," published an op-ed piece by Muslim Brotherhood Friday prayer leader Shaikh Salah Fuad Ubaid. Ubaid posited that the US Army abused Arab prisoners at GTMO because President Bush waged war against Arabs and the Muslim world. On the same day, independent newspaper "Al Wasat" reported that Bahrain Human Rights Society Deputy Secretary General Salman Kamal Al-Din questioned the credibility of the torture. He noted that a GOB security delegation recently visited Guantanamo and confirmed that the detainees were in good physical and mental condition.

4. (C) President of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights Nabeel Rajab told Pol/Econ Chief on May 16 that prior to the publishing of the open letter, Nabeel had been skeptical about the reports that one of the Bahraini detainees was tortured. However, the Abu Ghariebprison scandal gave the allegation credibility. He told Pol/Econ Chief that he believes the problem is systemic and not isolated to a few young soldiers.

5. (C) MFA Minister of State Abdelghaffar told CDA on May 11 (before the British detainees' open letter was reported in Bahrain) that Sunni Islamist parliamentarians had raised with him the reports of torture at Abu Gharieb and the possibility of Bahrainis being tortured at GTMO. He said he discounted these allegations but there is new parliamentary heat on the MFA to do something. Abdelghaffar said he knew a team had just gone to GTMO and found no particular complaints from the Bahraini detainees, but he asked if a Bahraini doctor could go look at them. CDA told the MinState such a visit was most unlikely to receive approval. Abdelghaffar understood but asked that we check.

6. (S/NF) COMMENT. On April 26 Emboff escorted a GOB delegation to GTMO that met with all six Bahraini detainees. The detainees did not lodge any complaints of mistreatment or abuse. On April 27 and April 29, the GOB delegation met with detainee Juma Al-Dossari. Al-Dossari complained that he had been in solitary confinement for over a year. Prison officials explained that Al-Dossari has attempted suicide at least seven times. They placed him under suicide watch in an individual cell for his own protection. Emboff reported that GOB delegations visited GTMO on two previous occasions. Since April 2002, the Bahraini detainees have not formally complained of mistreatment or abuse. For some GOB officials and societal leaders, the allegation that US prison guards tortured a Bahraini detainee at Guantanamo Bay has gained credibility in light of the Abu Gharieb prison scandal. END COMMENT.
FORD